

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A telecommunication multi-service transport system comprising:
at least one service card providing a predetermined telecommunication service; and
at least one protection card for replacing the service card when the service card fails, the protection card further comprising:
one or more test ports connectable to an external testing tool;
one or more protection circuits; and
at least one selection module associated with the test ports for allowing the testing tool to be connected to the protection circuits through at least one test port for testing the service card when the protection card is in a standby mode and for disconnecting the testing tool from the protection circuits when the service card fails.
2. The telecommunication multi-service transport system of claim 1 wherein the switch module uses a service port of the protection card to communicate with the service card for testing purposes.
3. The telecommunication multi-service transport system of claim 1 wherein the service card is a DS3 or DS1 line card.
4. The telecommunication multi-service transport system of claim 3 wherein the protection circuits includes a DS3 framer and an LIU.
5. The telecommunication multi-service transport system of claim 1 further

comprising means for enabling the test ports when the protection card is inserted in a protection slot of the telecommunication multi-service transport system.

6. The telecommunication multi-service transport system of claim 1 wherein the test ports are located on the front side thereof.

7. A multi-service transport platform (MSTP) comprising:

at least one working card slot receiving a service card, the service card having at least one service port carrying data traffic; and

at least one protection card slot receiving a protection card for replacing functions provided by the service card when the service card fails, the protection card further comprising:

at least one test port connectable to an external testing tool;

one or more protection circuits connectable to the service port of the service card and connectable to the testing tool through the test port; and

a relay module associated with the test port allowing the testing tool to be connected to the protection circuits and in communication with the service card when the protection card is in a standby mode for testing the service card.

8. The MSTP of claim 7 wherein the service card is DS3 or DS1 line card.

9. The MSTP of claim 7 wherein the test port is accessible from the front side of the MSTP.

10. The MSTP of claim 7 wherein the testing tool connected to the relay module communicates with the service card through at least one service port of the

protection card.

11. The MSTP of claim 7 further comprising means for enabling the test port when the protection card is inserted in the protection slot of the telecommunication equipment.

12. A protection card used in a multi-service provisioning platform (MSTP) comprising:

at least one test port connectable to an external testing tool;

one or more protection circuits connectable to a service port of a service card of the MSTP and connectable to the testing tool through the test port; and

a relay module associated with the test port allowing the testing tool to be connected to the protection circuits for testing the service card by accessing the service port of the service card through a service port of the protection card when the protection card is in a standby mode.

13. The protection card of claim 12 wherein the service card is DS3 or DS1 line card.

14. The protection card of claim 12 wherein the test port is accessible from the front side of the MSTP.

15. The protection card of claim 12 wherein the test port is a Weco port.

16. A method for testing a service card in a multi-service transport platform (MSTP) carrying data traffic, the method comprising:

connecting an external testing tool to at least one test port of at least one protection card of the MSTP;

connecting the external testing tool to one or more protection circuits of the protection card through the test port; and

accessing the service card by the external testing tool through at least one service port of the protection card for testing the service card.

17. The method of claim 16 further comprising detecting the protection card is in a standby mode.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the service card is DS3 or DS1 line card.

19. The method of claim 16 wherein the protection circuits include a DS3 framer and an LIU.

20. The method of claim 16 further comprising disconnecting the protection circuits from the test port when the service card fails and needs the protection card to perform its functions.

21. The method of claim 16 further comprising enabling the protection card when placed in at least one protection card slot of the MSTP.

22. The method of claim 16 wherein the connecting an external testing tool to at least one test port further includes connecting the external testing tool to the test port located on the front side of the MSTP.